

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 21718 111449Z
ACTION SS-25

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INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 21718

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, UR
SUBJECT: BREZHNEV'S PERFORMANCE DURING SEPTEMBER 9
MEETING WITH SENATOR KENNEDY

1. SENATOR KENNEDY'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS ADVISER, JAN KALICKI (A FORMER MEMBER OF STATE DEPARTMENT'S POLICY PLANNING STAFF), GAVE EMBOFF FOLLOWING IMPRESSIONS OF BREZHNEV'S HEALTH AND PERFORMANCE DURING HIS TWO-HOUR MEETING WITH SENATOR KENNEDY, WHICH KALICKI ATTENDED:

-- BREZHNEV SEEMED TO TIRE DURING LAST FIFTEEN MINUTES OF TWO-HOUR MEETING, BUT WAS MENTALLY "ALL THERE" UNTIL END.

-- HE SLURRED HIS WORDS, BUT SPOKE COHERENTLY AND HIS TRANSLATOR (SUKHUDROV) SEEMED TO HAVE NO DIFFICULTY IN UNDERSTANDING HIM.

-- HE SPOKE VERY ANIMATEDLY, WITH LOTS OF HAND GESTURES, GIVING APPEARANCE OF HAVING STRONG VIEWS AND DETERMINATION TO GET HIS POINT ACROSS.

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-- HE WALKED SLOWLY, BUT STEADILY, GETTING UP FROM TABLE A COUPLE OF TIMES, ONCE COMING AROUND TO SENATOR'S SIDE OF TABLE; HAD NO PHYSICAL ASSISTANCE.

-- HEARING PROBLEM WAS EVIDENT; TRANSLATOR WAS ALMOST SHOUTING AND SPEAKING SLOWLY; BREZHNEV WAS WEARING HEARING AID.

-- FACE WAS JOWLY, BUT NOT PUFFY; TANNED.

-- HE CHECKED FREQUENTLY WITH HIS AIDE ALEKSANDROV (WHO, EXCEPT FOR TRANSLATOR, WAS ONLY OTHER SOVIET IN MEETING; KALICKI WAS ONLY PERSON WHO ACCOMPANIED SENATOR), BOTH BEFORE AND AFTER SPEAKING, GIVING APPEARANCE OF GETTING ALEKSANDROV'S REASSURANCE ON WHAT HE WAS SAYING.

2. KALICKI GAVE US OVER-ALL IMPRESSION THAT BREZHNEV IS DECLINING, BUT AT PRESENT STILL CAPABLE OF PERFORMING AS LEADER. HE WAS IMPRESSED BY APPARENTLY VITAL ROLE PLAYED BY ALEKSANDROV AS ADVISER AND AIDE TO BREZHNEV DURING MEETING. GARRISON

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